

**SUPERIOR DEER MANAGEMENT
PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE**



**THE MICHIGAN UPPER PENINSULA QDM STUDY PROJECT
(A 5-YEAR QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT PROPOSAL)**

**SUBMITTED
May 12, 2004
To
Mr. Robert Doepker
Western UP District
Wildlife Management Unit Supervisor**

**Submitted
by
Superior Deer Management**

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ORGANIZATION MAKING PROPOSAL

The organization submitting this proposal is Superior Deer Management (SDM), a non-profit association promoting quality deer management (QDM) in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

LEGAL JUSTIFICATION

In May of 1999, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources published the Procedure for Initiation, Evaluation, and Review of Mandatory Quality Deer Management Proposals. The purpose of that document is to provide guidelines for individual and/or organizations interested in establishing QDM.

LOCATION AND LENGTH OF PROPOSED TEST

SDM recommends Michigan's Upper Peninsula be designated a quality deer management study area—except for Drummond Island (Deer Management Unit 117)—for a period of 5 years. If approved, this proposal will be implemented beginning in fall 2006 and continue through the 2010 deer season.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this UP-wide, 5-year study is to test the efficiency of QDM management principles on Michigan's Upper Peninsula deer herds. This mission will be implemented according to the following objectives: 1) change the current buck-age structure; 2) stabilize existing whitetail habitat; 3) strive for more balanced adult sex ratios; 4) improve stewardship of existing deer habitat; and, 5) provide for an unbiased study evaluation based primarily on hunter and landowner satisfaction.

Objective 1: Change the current buck-age structure over the five-year study from the present age structure to an increased proportion of middle-age 3-1/2 year old males. The present approximate age structure before hunting season for many sections of the UP are 55%-1.5 years old, 27%-2.5 years old, 14%-3.5 years old, 3%-4.5 years old, and 1%-5.5+ years old. This can be achieved by changing the regulations to read only bucks with three (3) points on a side can be harvested—each point being one or more inches in length to be legal for harvest.

Objective 2: Stabilize existing habitat by:

- Obtaining and maintaining accurate deer surveys relative to habitat carrying capacity for the UP's low, medium, and high snow-fall zones;
- Maintaining deer numbers recommended within the three snowfall zones;
- Lowering deer densities in those areas shown to be negatively impacted by deer;
- Developing quota for DMU be prepared by local wildlife biologists after consulting deer management data and listening to public input. Deer management data consider a combination of ecology, predation, winterkill, and economics factors—especially in the northern, high snowfall zones;

- Reducing the harvest pressure on yearling males while educating hunters about antlerless harvest as a sound deer management technique where necessary; and,
- Educational efforts.

Objective 3: Strive for more balanced adult sex ratios that are less skewed toward females by:

- Protecting yearling bucks from harvest; and,
- Shifting some of the harvest pressure to females where needed.

Objective 4: Improve stewardship of existing deer habitat by:

- Improve habitat on private land with landowner technical assistance and landowner cost/share programs;
- Holding and maintaining deer herds within established population goals;
- Working with NRC Habitat Committee;
- Developing a QDM Stewardship and Education Program consisting of the following activities:
 - Designing and distributing flyers for the proposed test area;
 - SDM volunteering to visit schools;
 - Regular attendance on outdoor radio talk shows;
 - Encouraging landowners and hunters to work with MDNR personnel on forestry and wildlife projects;
 - SDM talking to organizations upon request;
 - SDM carrying out QDM forums and workshops; and,
 - Multi-media coverage of QDM forums, workshops, and check-station activities.

Objective 5: Evaluate the study using the following criteria:

- Hunter, landowner and public satisfaction using MDNR fourth year random survey, newspaper accounts and camp surveys;
- Spot-light surveys carried out by MDNR and sport clubs;
- MDNR Pellet Group Surveys;
- MDNR Camp Surveys;
- SDM Data Collection Cards;
- Check-Station Data; and,
- Mackinaw Bridge Count Survey.

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